



# Potato Salad Improv Ala Platypus



trollcatz

 trollcatz

<https://trollcatz.livejournal.com/>  
2008-08-03 12:15:00

MOOD:  full


MUSIC: A Prairie Home Companion

Yesterday, Platypus took T. and me to the Arlington Farmer's Market (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A//www.arlingtonfarmersmarket.com/default.shtml>). Which is amazing. I had no idea grocery shopping was *fun*, and involved talking to people, and getting fed little samples of farm-made cheese and sniffing giant bouquets of flowers that I don't know the names of (but T. does). T. bought all kinds of stinky soap, and Platypus loaded me down with canvas bags full of produce in colors I'm not sure even have names, and then we trooped back to my car and I drove the entire greengrocer's in the back seat over to his place.


And then while T. and I were helping him put the groceries away, and he was explaining our Cake Options, he decided it was Time For Lunch.

Imagine, if you will, that you and your girlfriend and your best friend are all crammed into a tiny kitchen full of hanging baskets and Ikea racks, talking about cake and peaches. And somebody's stomach rumbles.


So here's how potato salad improvisation gets made, the Platypus way:

 [cvillette](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/) (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>) (kneeling in front of the fridge): Here. Take these potatoes.

You: They're purple. Potatoes aren't purple

 [cvillette](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/) (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): And these potatoes, they need to be used.

You: They look like fingers. Are potatoes supposed to look like fingers?

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): They're fingerling potatoes (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A/www.deliciousorganics.com/recipes/potatoes.htm>). Just like the name. Here, take this cheese.


You: That's cheese? It looks like a plastic tube of caulk.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): \*looking hurt\* It's chevre. Goat cheese.

T.: It's from Vermont. Well, France, originally. But that kind is from Vermont.


You: You're totally ganging up on me.


At this juncture, you notice that T. has a really excellent innocent expression.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): And these sundried tomatoes in olive oil. And this roasted garlic. And here, this bacon.


You: Where's the mayo?

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): No mayo today.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>) produces a withered lime from the back of the fruit drawer and tosses it to T. T. catches it, because your hands are full.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): Okay, everybody back out of the kitchen. Put the stuff on the table.

T. and you do, in fact *back* out of the kitchen, because it's too narrow to turn around in. You have to do a little waltz to get both of you to the table. She helps unload your arms.


 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>) starts assembling something on top of the stove. The bottom part looks like a spaghetti pot. The top part looks like a science fiction torture device, and makes noises like Wolverine's claws.

You: What's that?


 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): It's a spaghetti pot.

You: No. The thing inside it. The one that looks like the Amazon Queen of the Slave Planet would make Buck wear it as a head-severing collar.


T. makes an eerily authentic robot noise.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): Oh, that's a basket steamer. There's a cutting board on the table. Scrub the potatoes with the brush beside the sink and then cut them in quarters, please?


You: What do you want me to do with the bits of finger?

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): Keep the blood off the food. Watch out for that big knife. It's sharp!

You: It's your new knife? Should I use it?

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): (Up to his shoulders under the sink.) You can use the paring knife if that seems safer.

You: Use the paring knife.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>)\_climbs to his feet and hands T. something that looks like a medieval torture device with a handle.

You: Is that the Pear of Anguish?


T.: It's a reamer.


You: ...


T. and  **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>), in unison: It's for the *lime*.

You: Oh.

You scrub and cut up potatoes while

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>)\_fries six pieces of bacon in a big cast iron pan, and then sets them aside to drain. T. juices the lime and chops up the sundried tomatoes.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>)\_squishes up the garlic with a fork while the water comes to a boil under the steamer. The potatoes are beautiful inside: the purple ones are creamy-colored, with lacy violet snowflake patterns. The fingerling potatoes have bright crimson streaks. You had no idea potatoes were so interesting.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): Great. Now put the potatoes in the steamer. Careful! The water's hot!

You: Ow. I think I just scalded my wrist.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): Here, run it under cold water.

You: Well, at least it wasn't bacon grease.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): Here, have a beer while the potatoes cook.


You and T. drink his beer at the table while he cleans up the kitchen and puts the garlic, the tomatoes, the lime juice, and the crumbled-up bacon in a big bowl.

You: I still don't see how this turns into potato salad.

 **cvillette** (<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>): Watch and learn,


grasshopper.

You: Why don't you just boil the potatoes?

 [cvillette \(https://cvillette.livejournal.com/\)](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/): Because tiny little potatoes can get waterlogged if you boil them. Oh, look, see, they're nearly done already. Could you dump the hot water down the sink for me while I put these in the bowl?

You put your beer down and sidle past him in the tiny kitchen, doing a slightly different waltz step this time. He keeps his body between you and the steaming basket of tiny little potatoes. They look blue now rather than purple.


You: Aw.

 [cvillette \(https://cvillette.livejournal.com/\)](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/): I know. But they're still full of antioxidants. Watch the water--

You: It's hot. I remember.

The water goes down the sink in a cloud of steam. Meanwhile, the hot potatoes are getting tossed into the bowl, and the cheese is getting crumbled over the top of everything, where it turns into a creamy white lime-scented sauce that sticks the potatoes and the bacon and the garlic and the tomatoes together. He stirs it and grinds some sea salt and black pepper in, while you look over his shoulder.

You: Hey. That looks like potato salad.

 [cvillette \(https://cvillette.livejournal.com/\)](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/): Get the forks, would you? And open me a beer while I find us some bowls.

T.: Wow. This is *good*.

 [cvillette \(https://cvillette.livejournal.com/\)](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/): Improv is always more fun.

**TAGS:** [cooking with platypus](#)



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### Thank you

This is Patricia Andreoli, wife of Daphne Worth, who you all knew as Trollcatz. Daphne died

### ...And there goes the weekend

But hey, we got a day and a half of this one! And I got to sleep in for two whole mornings. Too bad

### As a law

enforcement  
professional--

51 comments

 [jadegirl](#)

[August 3 2008, 16:31:35 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

*I had no idea grocery shopping was fun*

I hear you. We live in NYC, and our favorite part of the week? Saturday morning at the Union Square Farmer's Market.

*Because tiny little potatoes can get waterlogged if you boil them.*

Oh. That explains why they tasted like glue when I made them. (You have a Platypus, I have Himself. Without, I'd go broke on takeout.)



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:08:08 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I know! Who knew? Waterlogged potatoes. It's all so mysterious.



 [kayjayoh](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:02:25 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Hurray for farmers' markets. We've got some lovely ones around here.

I should take a cue from you and start attending them with folks who know what they are doing, as produce is something that seems grand and lovely from a distance, but intimidates me when I actually get up close to it.

&lt;insert image of self being menaced by a giant turnip smoking a cigar and wearing a biker jacket>

I generally wail something like, "But what would I do with all that kale!?" wibble a bit, and then just by some bread and cheese. Preferably together. (Mmmm, cheesebread.)

You can pass along to the platypus that any potato salad that involves cheese \*and\* bacon gets my hearty Wisconsin stamp of approval.



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:07:12 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Consider it passed! Farmer's markets are scary, man. People know what they're talking about. And they take this stuff seriously!

There was a lady from Texas haranguing some poor guy about his okra being too big!

It's like going to a sporting event where nobody ever told you the rules.




 [Ometotchtli](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:14:02 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

*There was a lady from Texas haranguing some poor guy about his okra being too big!*

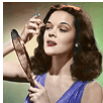
"None of the other ladies seem to have a problem with it."



 [ace\\_cub\\_reportr](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:14:53 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Drat. Beat me to it. You've got an unfair advantage.




 [Ometotchtli](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:16:14 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

That was you at the other end of this gutter!



 [ace\\_cub\\_reportr](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:20:00 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

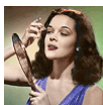
They let me up to feed, occasionally.



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:16:15 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Okra? Is that what the kids are calling it these days?



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:25:32 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

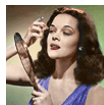
Faster to text than "zucchini."



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:27:56 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

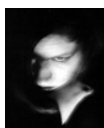
Okra? I hardly even know ya!



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:37:12 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Now everyone's staring at me. Next time, will use comics section as cover for snickering.



 [kayjayoh](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:34:16 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Oh hey, a friend told me a couple of (admittedly terrible) jokes the other day that totally made me think of you. I knew I'd need to pass them along, though there is a chance you will have already heard them.

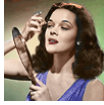
Q: How do you catch a unique rabbit?

A: You 'neak up on it.

Q: How do you catch a tame rabbit?

A: The tame way!

<bah-dum-ching!&g;



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:38:13 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

\*covers eyes with paws\*



[wendolen](#)

[August 3 2008, 20:53:32 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

The unique rabbit one was one of my granddad's favorites. I never heard the second one!  
:)

*Deleted comment*



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 4 2008, 18:20:09 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Food pr0n!



 [kayjayoh](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:14:23 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I don't actually find the markets themselves to be scary. Ours are delightful. We have a huge county market every Saturday at the state capital, and an assortment of smaller markets around the city and county pretty much every other day of the week. They are great place for people watching, if nothing else. There is always plenty of baked goods, cheeses, honey, candy, flowers, fruit...

It is the veggies that are scary. It's not that I don't like to eat them, but buying them and preparing them is a stumbling block for me. And if you don't use them quickly enough they go bad, and then you have rouge kohlrabi rampaging through the kitchen, beating up on the brownies.



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:19:01 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Yes! Kohlrabi--I have no idea what to do with a kohlrabi. Or even if it should have "a" in front of it.




 [glinda\\_w](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:25:29 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Little green UFOs. And "a" in front of one, I think...



 [glinda\\_w](#)


[August 3 2008, 18:29:57 UTC](#)

Edited: August 3 2008, 18:30:24 UTC

[COLLAPSE](#)

Serendipitously, elsewhere on my f-list [this kohlrabi](#), apparently on steroids, shows up...




 [trollcatz](#)

[August 3 2008, 18:50:49 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

...wow. That's Some Kohlrabi.



 [ace\\_cub\\_reportr](#)


[August 3 2008, 19:07:01 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Wonder what the other kohlrabi looks like. You know, the one who put that dollar on the bar.



 [completely\\_organic](#)

 [gh4acws](#)

[August 3 2008, 19:00:45 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

grown in my gfs garden - I do not know what breed it is it is gigantic but sweettasting and not tending toward stringy woody as some.

Ordinary kohlrabi from the supermarket produce section is tasteless and often has this wood like structure and I never liked it.

Now for the problem of what do do with this giant : steam it , eat thin slices raw, saute it, cover with white sauce , ... I think I am going to steam about half when cut up and then eat it with a tofu-naise and potatoes. ( tomorrow )



 [uffer](#)

[August 3 2008, 19:45:05 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

My God. That's... possibly the mothership? Am awed.



 [uffer](#)

[August 3 2008, 18:14:17 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Fear it. From a distance, while you wait for the mothership to turn up to collect it.

Or peel it, slice it, steam it and eat it with butter and black pepper. Or slice it raw into salad, or make little batons of it to dip in other stuff. Just be sure to get all the stem off it first, because that's a nasty chewy fibrous surprise to bump into in your yummy stuff. I have just discovered that it is apparently possible to stuff them, too, though I suspect that could be a fiddly sort of a job.



 [mearn4d10](#)

[August 3 2008, 19:06:20 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Starts with consonant, gets an 'a'; starts with a vowel, gets an 'an'.



At least no one has ever yelled me for following this dictum.

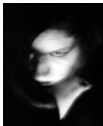
This is my moment of English Language Geekdom for today. Cherish.

 [cjtremlett](#)

[August 3 2008, 23:08:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I weep because I'm in the wrong state for that market! Best I've ever been to.

I'm biased towards Wisconsin in general and Madison in specific, though. \*g\*




 [kayjayoh](#)

[August 4 2008, 00:43:39 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

*I'm biased towards Wisconsin in general and Madison in specific, though. \*g\**

Nothing wrong with that. :)

One of my life goals is to get all the cool people I know from the rest of the world to come see Madison, at least once.

 [sleary](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:27:54 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Oh! That sounds like a potato salad I'd actually eat!



 [eljefe](#)

[August 3 2008, 17:58:56 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I'm with you. Not normally a potato salad fan, but that sound ok.



 [sleary](#)

[August 3 2008, 18:35:47 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I hate the nasty yellowy stuff you get at cookouts. But goat cheese? Sun-dried tomatoes? Pass the plate!

 [sleary](#)

[August 4 2008, 01:32:41 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

... and I made this for dinner tonight, and it was awesome. Thanks,  [trollcatz](#) and  [cvillette](#)!



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 4 2008, 12:11:21 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Yay! It's maddening that he just makes stuff up and it's that good. Genius should require planning.


 [beatriceeagle](#)

August 3 2008, 20:07:12 UTC    COLLAPSE

I would totally eat that potato salad minus the sun-dried tomatoes and with some other form of cheese. Mostly because I don't believe it's even the same species as potato salad with mayonnaise and mustard, which I hate.

Cooking with someone who actually knows how to cook sounds so...easy. When my sister and I cook at Thanksgiving, we're always forced to resort to innovation when we discover that she doesn't own, for instance, a ladle.




 trollcatz

August 4 2008, 12:09:37 UTC    COLLAPSE

It's okay. I'll eat your tomatoes and cheese.



 inaurolillium

August 4 2008, 06:23:06 UTC    COLLAPSE

I'm in Florida, at my folks' place, and trying to get caught up on LJ so I don't spend hours doing it when I get home tomorrow night and need to go straight to bed.

I got to the bit about the reamer, and scared Mom's dogs, I laughed so hard.



 trollcatz

August 4 2008, 12:09:07 UTC    COLLAPSE

I'm sorry, maybe it's my day job, but that thing looks like a weapon!



 inaurolillium

August 4 2008, 16:39:26 UTC    COLLAPSE

Well, maybe it's my hobby, but it always looks like something else to me... and I know what it is! Truly, I laughed because it *does* look really threatening, and it's perfectly understandable to react that way, and they knew it, too, which is why they jumped to tell you what it was.



 cvillette

August 4 2008, 16:55:27 UTC    COLLAPSE

You should have seen her eyes. And the way she started backing away from us.



 inaurolillium

August 4 2008, 17:01:02 UTC    COLLAPSE

Bwahahaha!



 boddhi\_d


August 4 2008, 18:32:54 UTC    COLLAPSE

Ha. I see your reamer & raise you a Juice-O-Mat:

<http://www.rocketvan.com/omat/history.php> (line drawings)

[http://www.ukclassifieds.co.uk/vintage\\_us\\_patent\\_rival\\_tilt\\_top\\_juice\\_o\\_mat\\_squeezer\\_juicer-o474395.html](http://www.ukclassifieds.co.uk/vintage_us_patent_rival_tilt_top_juice_o_mat_squeezer_juicer-o474395.html) (photos of the type I've got)

The one I have--the "Compact model tilt-top" version--is the coolest. 'Bout a foot long, HEAVY, and absurdly fun.


 [bunny\\_m](#)

[August 4 2008, 06:55:47 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

*You: They're purple. Potatoes aren't purple*

Ha! Yes, some of them are. And let me tell you, it makes for a rather strange (but very nomnomnomable,) meal when you have mash made from them. It comes out exactly the colour of PlayDoh purple. Truth. Went exceedingly well with the venison meatloaf that The Housemate made, too. \*salivates at the memory\*




 [trollcatz](#)

[August 4 2008, 14:14:26 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Huh. Wonder if Platypus will teach me to make meatloaf....

I bet *one* of T.'s relatives murders a cute defenseless overpopulating deer this fall.

 [bunny\\_m](#)

[August 4 2008, 15:07:20 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Those deer have it coming, I tell you! If they didn't want to be hunted, they shouldn't have gone and been all delicious, honestly.

\*salivates some more\*



 [inaurolillium](#)

[August 4 2008, 16:40:44 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

And when you make potato soup with goat's milk with them, they turn this lovely pale lavender...

 [pnkrokhockeymom](#)

[August 4 2008, 14:10:54 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Hey! I don't eat mayo. NOW I can make potato salad without it!

Yay! I'm going to try to make this next weekend.



 [trollcatz](#)

[August 4 2008, 14:13:21 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Platypus claims it's even better then next day. I say, "Next day?"

L



[pnkrokhockeymom](#)

[August 4 2008, 14:15:44 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

nom nom nom




[jry.](#)

[August 5 2008, 00:16:33 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

*T. makes an eerily authentic robot noise.*

You are a lucky lucky  [trollcatz.](#)

Even apart from getting Chaz to cook for you! Thanks for sharing.



[trollcatz](#)

[August 6 2008, 15:24:33 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I'm insanely lucky. I still pinch myself sometimes.



[inaurolillium](#)

[August 30 2009, 00:22:50 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Having finally, more than a year later, had fingerlings I needed to use up and chevre at the same time, I threw together my own version of this. I subbed verjuice for lime and had no bacon so I added some hazelnuts (for protein and crunch), and I added some Hungarian paprika and roasted the potatoes. And this morning, I put the leftovers in a scramble. I recommend this use for leftovers.

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### Thank you

This is Patricia Andreoli, wife of Daphne Worth, who you all knew as Trollcatz. Daphne died

### ...And there goes the weekend

But hey, we got a day and a half of this one! And I got to sleep in for two whole mornings. Too bad

As a law  
enforcement  
professional--